

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 2280

FOR EUR/RPM

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TAGS: PFOR NATO MILI UR XF XG XI
SUBJ: MEDITERRANEAN REPORT: DEC 1976-APR 1977

REF: A. USNATO 2240 DTG 161104Z APR 77 ,95-), B. STATE 067180
DTG 260026Z MAR 77, C. USNATO 1411 DTG 121525Z MAR 77

SUMMARY: THIS CABLE FORWARDS PROPOSED TALKING POINTS FOR USE WHEN THE "REPORT ON THE SITUATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, DEC 1976-APRIL 77" (REF A) IS REVIEWED BY THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL (NAC) ON APRIL 27. IT ALSO SUGGESTS SEVERAL POINTS ON WHICH WE BELIEVE THE COUNCIL WOULD WELCOME FURTHER US ANALYSIS AT THE TIME OF THE REVIEW. WHEN APPROVED, THE REPORT WILL BE TRANSMITTED TO MINISTERS AT THE MAY SUMMIT IN LONDON. ACTION REQUESTED: SEE PARA 5. END SUMMARY.

1. WE APPRECIATE THE USEFUL GUIDANCE FOR THE DRAFTING SESSIONS PROVIDED IN REF B. MOST CHANGES SUGGESTED THEREIN HAVE BEEN INCORPORATED IN THE REPORT. AS NOTED REF C, FURTHER MODIFICATIONS ARE NOT NORMALLY MADE AT THE TIME OF THE NAC REVIEW, BUT COMMENTS AND CORRECTIONS WILL BE MADE ORALLY BY THE PERMREPS AS THEY CONSIDER THE REPORT ON APRIL 27. THESE COMMENTS THEN BECOME PART CONFIDENTIAL

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OF THE LARGER RECORD SURROUNDING THE REPORT.

2. PARA 15 OF THE REPORT, STATING THAT "DUE CONSIDERATION COULD BE GIVEN TO THE SITUATION IN MALTA OVER THE COMING YEARS" RETAINS THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF FORMULATION ON MALTA. DURING THE DRAFTING PROCESS, THERE WAS A GENERAL DISINCLINATION TO CHANGE IT FOR FEAR OF OPENING A BROADER DISCUSSION WHICH WOULD BE PARTICULARLY UNWELCOME BY THE US AND THE UK. THE ITALIAN REPRESENTATIVE SAID NOTHING,

BUT WE CANNOT BE AT ALL CERTAIN THAT THE ITALIAN PERMREP WILL SIMILARLY AVOID RAISING MALTA DURING THE NAC REVIEW. WE WILL PLAN TO FOLLOW STANDING GUIDANCE AND ATTEMPT TO HELP KEEP DISCUSSION TO A MINIMUM.

3. AS WE ANTICIPATED (REF B), THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION ABOUT LIBYA DURING THE DRAFTING PROCESS, AND WE BELIEVE A SUPPLEMENTARY WASHINGTON ANALYSIS OF QADHAFT'S PRESENT MOTIVES AND FOREIGN POLICY DIRECTIONS WOULD BE WELCOMED BY THE COUNCIL.

4. THE DRAFTERS SHOWED PARTICULAR INTEREST IN THE US EVALUATION IN RELATION TO PARA 21(I) OF THE REPORT THAT "THE DURATION OF THE OPERATIONS OF THE KIEV WITH THE NORTHERN FLEET SUGGEST THAT THIS IS A PERMANENT ASSIGNMENT". COLLECTIVE SKEPTICISM RESULTED IN AGREEMENT TO MAKE THE ASSERTION MORE CONDITIONAL. IN GENERAL, HOWEVER, THE DRAFTERS ATTEMPTED TO REDUCE SPECULATION TO A MINIMUM IN DRAFTING THIS EDITION OF THE REPORT.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: WE WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING BY OOB APRIL 26; A) DEPT'S COMMENTS ON THE SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS AND THE EXPERTS REPORT; B) SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS ON LIBYA AND THE KIEV FOR USE AT THE APRIL 27 NAC.
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6. BEGIN TEXT OF DRAFT TALKING POINTS:
--WE APPROVE THE REPORT, FINDING IT A LEAN AND USEFUL SUMMARY OF EVENTS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA--PARTICULARLY AS THEY RE LATE TO SOVIET PENETRATION. --WE NOTE WITH INTEREST THE REPORT'S OBSERVATION THAT DURING 1976 THE NUMBER OF SOVIET SURFACE COMBATANTS WAS ABOUT 11PERCENT LESS THAN IN 1975, THE FIRST SUCH REDUCTION SINCE A PERMANENT SOVIET PRESENCE WAS ESTABLISHED. --HOWEVER, THE SOVIET UNION HAS A CONTINUING CAPACITY, DESPITE LOSS OF MEDITERRANEAN PORT FACILITIES, TO DRAMATICALLY INCREASE THE SIZE OF ITS FLEET WHEN IT SO DESIRES. --WE AGREE WITH THE REPORT'S ANALYSIS THAT AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE LOW PROFILE OF THE SOVMEDRON HAS BEEN THE ABSENCE OF SUITABLE MAJOR OCCASIONS IN RECENT MONTHS FOR DEMONSTRATIVE USE OF THE SQUADRON.
END DRAFT TALKING POINTS.PEREZ

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